BLOOD BEAST

#3 | Halloween 2025 Edition | £3.50 | Mad Monster Movie Reviews and Beyond!

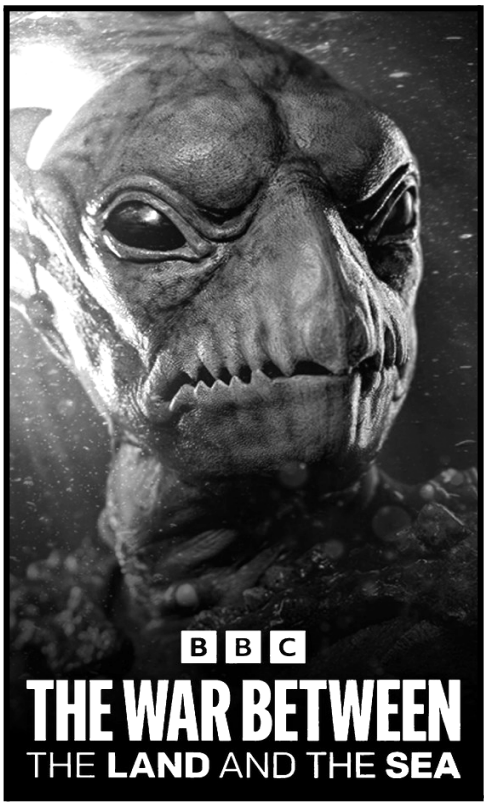
Cave Creatures!

Hypersexual Aliens!

Linnea Quigley!

Red Weed Press

plus
Immoral Science!
Possessive Protoplasm!
Simian Shockers!
Shoddy Vampires!
Old Mother Riley!
Abysmal Batwomen!
and more!



Blood Beast #3 | October 2025
Mad Monster Movie Reviews and Beyond**!**
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Film Reviews: **MANIAC**, **NURSE SHERRI**, **EEGAH!**, **TROG**, **KONGA**, **QUEEN KONG**, **WHAM BAM THANK YOU SPACEMAN**, **ET THE PORNO**, **INSEMINOID**, **XTRO**, **CREEPOZOIDS**, **LINNEA QUIGLEY'S HORROR WORKOUT**, **THE WILD WORLD OF BAT WOMAN**, **THE BATWOMAN**, **SON OF DRACULA**, **VAMPIRA**, **MOTHER RILEY MEETS THE VAMPIRE**, **THE MAD LOVE LIFE OF A HOT VAMPIRE**
TV Zone: DOCTOR WHO - THE SEA DEVILS, DOCTOR WHO - WARRIORS OF THE DEEP, DOCTOR WHO - LEGEND OF THE SEA DEVILS, THE WAR BETWEEN THE LAND AND THE SEA
Comics Scene: *The Courtyard*, *Neonomicon*

The Threads of Terror

Psychotronic media has always been treated like a bad smell, from stuffy high-brow critics to consistent snubbing by award ceremonies. Humanist drama (or even better, those with subtitles) rule for this particular hierarchy, yet horror, SF and fantasy movies have a rich history - thematically and personally - regardless of budget or stature. It doesn't seem to count that action and adventure pictures lead in total gross revenue and ticket sales worldwide, or that horror ranks as the most reliable and profitable output for studios due to low production budgets paired with high theatrical turnout.

Mainstream critics have problems adjusting to spectacle and imagination, implying that real-world issues are more important. It doesn't seem to matter how inventive or engaging a horror picture is, critics seem to be absorbed in their own private fear: if I show how much I enjoyed being terrified, will this make me as deranged or sociopathic as the filmmakers and fans? Milestones in the genre, particularly those with subverted character studies, can begrudgingly be acknowledged, but only by re-definition. John Carpenter's **THE THING**, for example, is a masterclass in paranoia and suspense as well providing groundbreaking practical effects, and can conveniently be referred to as a psychological thriller. Similarly, projects like Stanley Kubrick's hackneyed adaptation of **THE SHINING** is elevated to high art because of the status of the director, even when they have no feel for the content.

Whatever your view, really bad movies often provide influence that later entries run with. Within the films reviewed in this issue, even side-show abnormalities like Dwain Esper's **MANIAC** lays down a path, while Al Adamson and Arch Hall Snr get bitten with the movie-making bug and forge their own distinctive paths. Not everyone will rejoice in the fact that legal drama **KRAMER VS KRAMER** won Best Picture, Best Director (Robert Benton), Best Actor (Dustin Hoffman) and Best Supporting Actress (Meryl Streep) at the Oscars; remember, 1979 also saw the release of **ALIEN** and **APOCALYPSE NOW** (and **MOONRAKER** led worldwide box office receipts). In a world that is actually grounded and attached to their feelings, perhaps one day we might get **KRAMER VS KRAMER VS GODZILLA**.

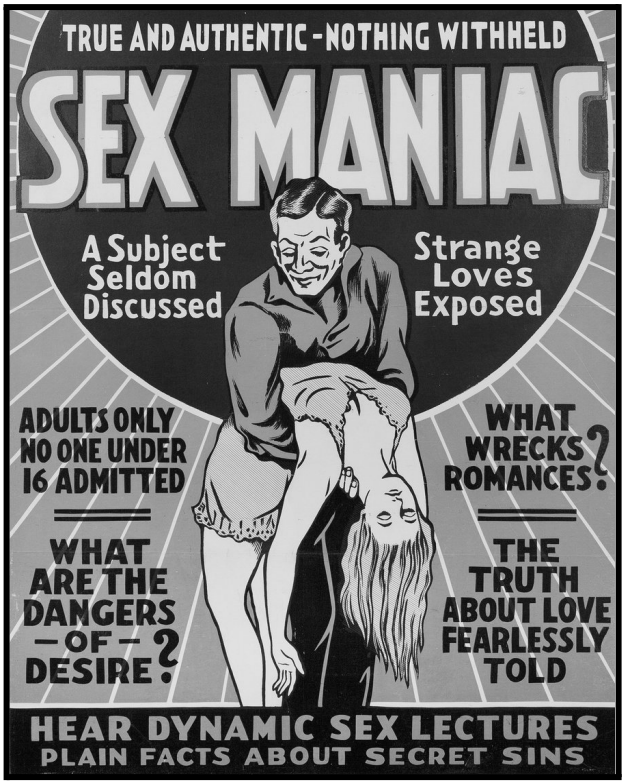
MANIAC
(US, 1934, Roadshow Attractions, 51 mins)

Regarded as the Ed Wood Jnr of his day, Dwain Esper and his wife, Hildegarde Stadie, churned out a host of ludicrous outings during the 1930s and 1940s. After receiving a film processing company over settlement from failed business litigation, Esper worked around the Motion Picture Production Code by passing off lurid melodramas as educational programmers. Denied access to the studio-controlled movie palaces, the producer/director self-distributed to burlesque theatres and sideshows, often shuffling footage between prints or changing titles to sidestep regional bans. Esper's cutthroat distribution tactics and hilariously misleading advertising eventually caught up with him as the drive-ins took hold, but for anyone lucky enough to witness the sheer weirdness of his films, the experience will never be forgotten.

MANIAC - later retitled **SEX MANIAC** - is Esper's most infamous bad film, and certainly the most consistently demented. Here the fake educational slant is mental illness, illustrated by a number of title cards describing different psychological states totally irrelevant to the sporadic storyline. Esper's informative moniker didn't work for **MANIAC** in New York, however, as in 1938 the Board of Censors banned it from the state, calling the picture "inhuman" and "immoral."

A very loose splicing of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Black Cat* and H. P. Lovecraft's *Herbert West Re-Animator*, **MANIAC** follows the exploits of mad scientist Dr Meirschultz (Horace Carpenter). The Doctor is aided by a Vaudeville impressionist with a shady past - Maxwell (Bill Woods) - who escapes his draconian working practices by shooting Meirschultz and assuming his identity. Becoming insane, Maxwell bricks up the body in the basement, not noticing that the Doctor's black cat Satan has got in with him, and you know the rest. What you wouldn't know are plot threads such as a patient thinking he is the killer orangutan inspired by Poe's *Murders in the Rue Morgue*, and a tacked-on involvement from Maxwell's inheritance-hungry wife.

Cats have a hard time throughout. In the most gross scene, Maxwell - who has a feline phobia - gouges out Satan's eye and eats it, babbling "its not unlike an oyster, or a grape, but the gleam is gone." Not only is the stunt cat not black, the separated eye


TRUE AND AUTHENTIC - NOTHING WITHHELD
SEX MANIAC
A Subject Seldom Discussed
Strange Loves Exposed
ADULTS ONLY NO ONE UNDER 16 ADMITTED
WHAT WRECKS ROMANCES?
WHAT ARE THE DANGERS — OF — DESIRE?
THE TRUTH ABOUT LOVE FEARLESSLY TOLD
HEAR DYNAMIC SEX LECTURES
PLAIN FACTS ABOUT SECRET SINS

looks particularly human. Additionally, a neighbour keeps hundreds of cats to harvest their fur, but the most troublesome aspect of the production is the alleged use of string to tie the moggies and dogs together for their on-screen scraps.

Made even below Poverty Row standards - a crew member's shadow can be seen on Maxwell as he stands up in the first scene - and with performances that can best be described as atrocious, **MANIAC** is nevertheless important in film history as the point where horror and sexploitation first merged. In his 1996 *Midnite Marquee* book *Guilty Pleasures of the Horror Film*, Bret Wood defends Esper, asserting that "consciously or not, **MANIAC** is the mockery of Hollywood, refusing to mimic its veneer of sophistication and its idea of artistry, delivering the same sex, violence and intrigue in slop buckets rather than pearly teacups." More worryingly, Wood has argued that the backyard cat farm was a real, illegal operation in Los Angeles.

Over the years, most other critics cite the movie as an abomination. With its short running time there certainly is no time to breathe, and everything is too bizarre to be predictable or boring. If you feel the need to expand your 1930s horror palette away from the Universal classics, you need look no further than the work of Dwain Esper.

NURSE SHERRI
(US, 1978, Independent-International, 88 mins)

Al Adamson was a Hollywood born filmmaker who directed a prolific number of horror and exploitation pictures between 1960 and 1983. The son of silent film stars Denver Dixon and Dolores Booth, Adamson's flirtation with the movies started at the age of six, when he appeared in the 1935 zero-budget western **DESERT MESA**, which was written, produced and directed by his father. Subsequently, Dixon introduced Al to young distributor Sam Sherman, who would also act as producer on Adamson's most infamous works, **PSYCHO A GO-GO**, **SATAN'S SADISTS** and **DRACULA VS FRANKENSTEIN**.

Along his delirious journey, Al developed a repertory company of faded stars and celebrities. These down-trodden individuals included Russ Tamblyn, John Carradine and Lon Chaney Jnr, and on a more successful scale KFC founder Colonel Saunders makes an uncredited cameo in his 1970 neo-Nazi crime drama **HELL'S BLOODY ANGELS**. Adamson even made some of his films on location at Spahn Ranch in Los Angeles, the adopted home of Charles Manson and his followers.

After marrying his long-term star Regina Carrol, Al retired from show business to pursue a career in real estate, although he did continue to develop scripts, one of which prophetically featured a man being murdered and buried alive beneath his own house. In 1995, Adamson was killed by a live-in contractor hired to work at his Indio, California ranch, and buried beneath a tile floor which had housed the filmmaker's beloved whirlpool hot tub. Al's partially decomposed body was eventually discovered by police, shrouded in linen. Fred Fulford was convicted of the murder and sentenced to twenty-five years in prison, apparently having bludgeoned Adamson to death from behind with a hammer. Previously, the builder had abused his employer's hospitality by stealing a credit card and forging cheques; fleeing to Florida in the director's Toyota pickup, Fulford was collared by the cops wearing an ill-fitting grey suit from Al's wardrobe.

In typical Adamson style, **NURSE SHERRI** was released under a plethora of alternative titles (**BLACK VOODOO**, **KILLER'S CURSE**, **BEYOND THE LIVING**, **HANDS OF DEATH** and **HOSPITAL OF TERROR**) and made available in two different cuts (the 88 minute "Horror Cut" and the 84 minute "Nude Cut" with four added skin scenes). Essentially a mix of **THE EXORCIST**, nurseploitation and blaxploitation, we open with occult evangelist Thomas Reanhauer (William Roy) attempting to raise the dead in a desert. After suffering a heart attack, he passes away in a hospital operating room, but not before he transfers his essence - a blob of green protoplasm - onto Nurse Sherri Martin (Jill Jacobson). Sherri then embarks on a vengeance mission against those who failed to save Reanhauer's life.

Jacobson's interpretation of demonic possession seems to be that of someone who has wandered onto a film set, with no knowledge on how they got there. Unfortunately her performance is not enhanced by any vomiting, levitation or rotating head tropes, rather entering the supernatural realm by adopting a male voice and becoming handy with a pitchfork. Unsurprisingly, she is acted offscreen by Marilyn Joi as Nurse Tara Williams, who has a soap subplot with a blind American football player patient.

The last collaboration between Adamson and Sherman, **NURSE SHERRI** ticks all the boxes: talky, fleetingly creepy but always crazy (one scene has the Doctors elicit foreplay while in the throes of surgery). It's all a few years too late to catch the coattails of its adopted trends, especially as audiences were flocking to the new slasher fad with **HALLOWEEN**.

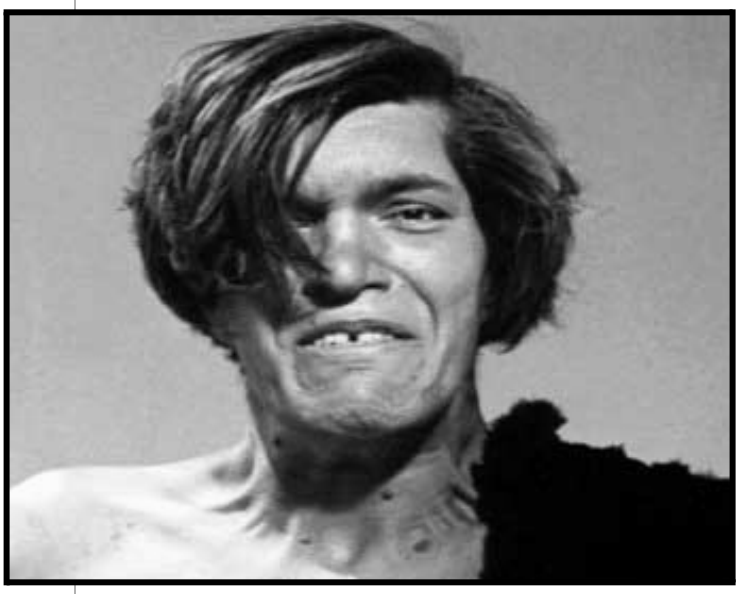
EEGAH!
(US, 1962, Fairway, 92 mins)

Arch Hall Snr produced, directed and provided the basic story for this terminal caveman opus. Hall had grown up as a South Dakota cowboy, before starting his film career as a stuntman in 1930s Hollywood. This association with tinsel town expanded into small action roles, and by the early 1960s he had formed Fairway Productions.

In 1963 his son, actor and musician Arch Hall Jnr, and chiropractor receptionist Marilyn Manning, starred in **THE SADIST**. Based on the killing spree of Charles Starkweather and Caril Ann Fugate, this is a tension-filled exploitation masterclass; a year earlier, Hall Jnr and Manning played more conventional lovers in this neanderthal-out-of-time stinker, with Richard Kiel as the titular attraction.

In **EEGAH!** Manning plays Roxy, who nearly runs over the giant caveman while driving near Palm Springs. She tells her gas attendant/guitarist boyfriend Tom (Hall Jnr) and author father William (Hall Snr, billed as William Watters), who are both sceptical of her tale. But when William ventures into the desert to search for the throwback, he is kidnapped by the caveman and taken to his liar. Here, Eegah introduces the writer to his dead relatives, William surmising that the giant had survived for so long because of the sulphur in the walls. When William fails to keep his helicopter rendezvous, Tom hops into his Dunebuggy and takes Roxy into the barren landscape, where the trio eventually escape after a lousy song and plenty of non-action.

Hall Snr intended **EEGAH!** as a starring vehicle for his pug-nosed son, who had found success in the Los Angeles surf rock scene. But nobody leaves any positive impression in this tedious fusion of schlock horror and teenage romance. The poster ad line “The Crazed Love of a Prehistoric Giant for a Ravishing Teenage Girl!” is particularly wide of the mark, as Eegah is hardly crazed, and Manning certainly not ravishing (plus she looks to be in her mid-twenties). Because of the relentless flatness, any sentimentality comes across as forced and fake; when Roxy develops a fascination with the caveman and gives him a shave, any feeling is lost by having Eegah hilariously try to eat and lick the shaving cream off his face. But no matter, because during the climactic yawn-fest when the cave dweller spots Roxy at a pool party, he is shot dead by the police.



Thematically, **EEHAH!** attempts to tap into the *Beauty and the Beast* narrative, but also anticipates the teen surfer/monster hybrids that were about to briefly become popular. These films, typified by terminal budgets, awkward rubber creature suits and infectious instrumental soundtracks, would reach their zenith with 1965’s **THE BEACH GIRL AND THE MONSTER**, directed by and starring former 1940s matinee idol Jon Hall (no relation).

In his first major film role, you have to feel for Kiel. Despite his imposing physical presence, any further characterisation is reduced to grunts, groans, and aggressively shouting his own name. Although the caveman aggressively pursues Roxy, it is ultimately a tale of heartbreak for a lonely creature completely alienated by his environment.

With his 7’2” frame and craggy features - both the result of a glandular disorder - Kiel’s demeanour resulted in an array of oddball roles, such as The Solarite Creature in **THE PHANTOM PLANET** (his first credited appearance), The Frankenstein Monster in THE MONKEES TV show, and the bald extraterrestrial in the celebrated TWILIGHT ZONE episode TO SERVE MAN. But unlike most novelty performers of his size he became a genuine star, best known for Golob in the Italian **STAR WARS** rip-off **THE HUMANOID**, and the steel-toothed Jaws in James Bond pictures **THE SPY WHO LOVED ME** and **MOONRAKER**.

TROG
(GB, 1962, Herman Cohen Productions, 93 mins)

Having grown up in poverty and suffered abuse as a child, Joan Crawford was famous for her fighting spirit. Directed by Freddie Francis from a story by Peter Bryan and John Gilling, **TROG** was Crawford's final film. Concerning the discovery of an Ice Age *trog*lodyte in contemporary Britain, the faded star probably needed her then preferred tipple of vodka to get through the proceedings. As *The New York Times* stated, "[**TROG**] proves that Joan Crawford is grimly working at her craft. Unfortunately the determined lady, who is fetching in a variety of chic pants suits and dresses, has little else going for her."

At least the picture was of some benefit for Crawford, as the actress - then on Pepsi-Cola's board of directors - demanded product placement in all her later films (in this one, terrified villagers run past a Pepsi stand while fleeing the critter). Since she is now best remembered as the subject of both the book and movie versions of *Mommie Dearest*, the maternal instincts Crawford displays toward Trog have an even more laughable quality today than when the film was made.

When an ape-man is found in a Peak District cave, anthropologist Dr Brockton (Crawford) brings him back to her lab for study. This is especially irksome for businessman Sam Murdock (Michael Gough), who is equally venomous about a waste of taxpayers money for the research facility, and that Brockton has the audacity of being a woman. As the experiments continue, Trog relives his illogical past copiously illustrated by Ray Harryhausen/Willis O'Brien dinosaur footage from **THE ANIMAL WORLD**. Murdock remains troubled, particularly when the municipal court (headed by Thorley Walters) sides with Brockton and a now international band of scientists. Enraged, Murdock releases Trog, hoping the caveman will be killed by locals or the authorities.

Developed by Tigon, the project was sold to American B-movie producer Herman Cohen (who can be glimpsed as a barman). But **TROG** is a hilarious misstep by anyone's standards, the titular creature played by Joe Cornelius, a professional English wrestler known as The Dazzler. Cast for his physique and athletic abilities, the "missing link" costume was a salvaged **2001** ape mask and some fur. This ramshackle appearance is summed up by Inspector Greenham (Bernard Kay), when he states "it looks like something out of a student's rag week." Brightly lit in his cage, exposing its contrasting skin tones, Trog's initial training involves winding up a toy doll and swaying lovingly to classical music (his affinity to Brockton's scarf also makes one question his sexuality). Even Crawford can't save the missing link in the name of science - to be fair, the "monster" does kill four men and a dog, plus kidnaps a child - a record that includes spiking a butcher on a meat-hook, predating the scene from **THE TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE**.

A guilty pleasure even for the most hardened cult fan, **TROG** does play a significant role in horror history. A young John Landis saw the picture which led him to make his debut **SCHLOCK**, a homage where the director played an ape-man emerging from a Southern California cave. Having been a Fox mail-boy Landis knew John Chambers, the make-up maestro behind **PLANET OF THE APES**. The important thread is that after Chambers declined to make the required monkey man on budgetary grounds, Don Post Studios put Landis in contact with Rick Baker. Baker's suit for "The Banana Killer" is wonderful, and clearly the highlight of the movie, so there is an argument that without **TROG** Landis and Baker would never have teamed-up for **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON**.

Amazingly, a double bill of **TROG** and Hammer's **TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA** - released in America during October 1970 - became the number one grossing attraction in the country, earning $2,900,583.

KONGA
(GB/US, 1961, Anglo-Amalgamated, 90 mins)

Shot in the fictitious but grand sounding SpectraMation, and allegedly filmed as **I WAS A TEENAGE GORILLA**, John Lemont's **KONGA** is a preposterous man-in-a-monkey-suit horror, which hardly lives up to the usual poster hyperbole: “not since **KING KONG** has the screen exploded with such mighty fury and spectacle!”

We follow Michael Gough as crazed botanist Charles Decker ("in science, a human being is only a cypher"), who wills an enlarged ape to acts of violence. Presumed dead after crashing in the African jungle, Decker returns to London a year later with a rare form of plant life, plus a pet chimp named Konga. When extracts from the vegetation cause rapid growth the chimp grows to Gorilla size and the doctor uses him to murderous effect: the school Dean, a competitor and the boyfriend of the bustiest of his teenage students, Sandra (Claire Gordon), are all dispatched. Although Decker's assistant Margaret (Margo Johns) has kept his activities quiet in lieu of marriage, when she too discovers of her intended demise, she gives Konga an excessive dose of the super-serum. This results in Decker finding himself in the clutches of a now-gargantuan simian by Big Ben.

A riot of abysmal miniatures and opticals, **KONGA** was co-produced and co-written by low-rent Hollywood mogul Herman Cohen. It also sees Gough in predatory and tantrum heaven, at one point gunning down his cat after it drinks some of the formula ("we're not ready to have a cat the size of a leopard running through the streets!").

QUEEN KONG
(GB/Germany, 1976, Dexter/Cine-Art, 84 mins)

Similar to the South Korean/US co-production **A*P*E**, this atrocious feminist "comedy" was rushed into production on the news that Dino de Laurentiis was remaking the 1933 RKO classic **KING KONG**. While RKO filed a $1.5m lawsuit against **A*P*E**, Dino issued an injunction against **QUEEN KONG**’s release and it consequently never played theatrically in the UK, although it had limited runs in Italy and Germany.

Filmmaker Luce Habit (Rula Lenska) takes Ray Fay (Robin Askwith) - and her all-girl crew - to Africa on yacht The Liberated Lady. Eventually reaching “Lazanga Where They Do the Konga,” they discover a tribe where men are the servants. The Queen (Valerie Leon) prepares Ray as a sacrifice to the simian goddess, but the gorilla is so taken with the hippie dropout she takes him to her lair. When Luce and her crew rescue Ray, they manage to subdue the beast and all return to London. But unlike the original, Queen Kong is saved when Ray rallies the oppressed women of our capital.

A terminal merger between the **CONFESSIONS** and **CARRY ON** franchises, even Askwith is ashamed of the film. It is also a spoof of all trades and master of none (native dancers with rotating heads mimic **THE EXORCIST**, a shark with lipstick is “Lady Jaws” *et al*), and one’s mind is boggled by the lyrics of the theme song: “she’s the queenie of my weenie/when I’m feeling mighty spunky, I want to do it with my hunky monkey.” The only amusement is playing "spot the cameo/extra," which includes Linda Hayden, **VAMPYRES** star Marianne Morris, future 'ALLO! 'ALLO! mainstay Vicki Michelle, and Ingmar Bergman’s daughter Anna.

WHAM BAM THANK YOU SPACEMAN
(US, 1975, Boxoffice International, 75 mins)

"Are we alone in the universe?" remains one of the most psychologically and scientifically important questions known to humankind. The answer, of course, is yes, certainly in the context of the types of creatures and lifeforms movies have thrown at us. Films such as **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND**, **ET: THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL** and **SUPERMAN** offer a friendly hand, but there are also a multitude of alien races with darker agendas, namely that infamous trope of needing Earth women for breeding stock.

This William A. Levey Sci-Fi farce details Operation Procreation, as two soldiers from the planet Urine are sent to Earth to impregnate as many females as possible. This is in preparation for eventual habitation of our world, as Urine will disintegrate in five hundred years when its orbit will merge with that of their sun. Transporting targets to their ship, the Urinians became aroused with inflating earlobes and retractable noses.

Look out for future Ilsa actress Dyane Thorne as a hooker, Ed Wood Jnr *alumni* Valda Hansen - well past her nudity sellbuy date - as a horny housewife, and Russ Meyer starlet Haji is fleetingly glimpsed as a harem girl. Made available in softcore and hardore versions, **WHAM BAM THANK YOU SPACEMAN** fails even as a piece of kitsch entertainment, as its dialogue is not just full of toilet humour and expletives, but delivered in such a hateful and vindictive tone. Women are just referred to by parts of their anatomy and - together with homophobic slurs - make what could have been a Z-grade romp into a disdainful slice of sexploitation.

ET THE PORNO
(Germany, 1996, United Movie Production, 86 mins)

Directed by Lidko and Siggi Entinger, this hardcore direct-to-video extravaganza is also known as **ET THE VAGINA** and **EXTRA TERRESTRIAN: THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIALS** (the latter its direct German translation). A female alien from Uterus - labelled a Z-9 unit and played by Silvia Squire - is sent to Victorian-era Earth to learn our customs. Luckily, our visitor finds a mansion filled with aristocrats who do nothing other than indulge in carnal activity. Z-9's exploration begins by peering through doorways at the sexy shenanigans, but soon wants to become involved herself in the name of research.

ET THE PORNO is both creepy and odious. The crudely-sculpted alien suit resembles Steven Spielberg's original creation caked in sun-baked dog shit, with crutch and nipple areas conveniently open to the elements. Z-9's cold dead eyes mirror those of her German porn star colleagues, the alien also moaning like a wounded animal during sex, counteracted by thick, teutonic groans of "oh ya" and "vunderbar." It is a mystery why we are in this time period, as is the actor's refusal to fully shed their cumbersome costumes.

For **ET**-themed porn completists, you can also try Brazil's 1986 **KEEP UP THE LUST ET**, a beach-set dream-becomes-reality narrative. For a more brazen treatment and one that actually follows the story of the original, you can experience **ET XXX A DREAMZONE PARODY** from 2013.

INSEMINOID
(GB, 1981, Jupiter, 93 mins)

In the wake of endless **ALIEN** rip-offs, Britain's contribution to this subgenera were two low-budget films both structured around extraterrestrial rape: Norman J. Warren's **INSEMINOID** - where Judy Geeson is assaulted by a monster with a test-tube penis - and Harry Bromley Davenport's **XTRO** - where a male abductee is reborn fully grown by a girl who has been probed by an alien tentacle (for those who want to try this at home, the inseminatory fluid in Warren's entry was a combination of raw egg and watered-down Swarfega).

Warren started in pictures by helming sexploiters before moving onto horror (most notably with **SATAN'S SLAVE** and **TERROR**). Along with Pete Walker, Warren's films are dubbed New Wave British horror, on account that they upped the ante of explicitness and were mostly set in the modern day.

INSEMINOID however sees Warren in space, where an archaeological expedition discovers a vast tomb-like complex and an assortment of crystals beneath a strange planet. The first half is unbelievably slow and only gets going when Sandy (Geeson) is attacked. Once impregnated the character - at the psychic urging of the crystals - hunts down her colleagues, feasting on them to sustain her pregnancy, and Sandy eventually gives birth to plasma-seeking twins who abscond to Earth.

Retitled **HORROR PLANET** for American audiences, the highlight of **INSEMINOID** is John Metcalfe's low-lit Chislehurst Caves interiors, which make the most of a combination of blue and red filters. This surprisingly lush element contrasts with the increasingly garish content and sleazy foundation of a pregnant woman being the villain of the piece.

XTRO
(GB, 1983, Ashley/Amalgamated Film, 87 mins)

This surreal shocker mixes scenes of bitter, understated British life with effects heavy on teeth and slime. Narrowly escaping becoming the second official Brit-made video nasty - that honour only belonged to James Kenelm Clarke's **EXPOSE** - **XTRO** was marketed as the anti-**ET**, with the tagline "not all aliens are friendly." In fact no-one "phones home" here: they're usually bludgeoned, stabbed or sucked to death in a mass of rubber mallet-head bopping, murderous toy tanks and even a black panther.

Tony (Simon Nash) is playing with his father Sam (Philip Sayer) and their dog in their garden when the sky shatters and Sam is absorbed by a white light and disappears. Three years later, Tony is suffering from recurring nightmares. Feigning amnesia, Sam returns and moves back into a fragmented family unit, and sets about rebuilding his relationship with Tony and Rachel (Bernice Stegers). But this is a front to get closer to his son; in an unsettling scene Sam bites Tony's neck and starts pumping secretions into the child, preparing him for a similar change.

This family gift gives Tony amazing abilities which he uses to bring a toy clown and an Action Man doll to life. The boy sends the now life-size doll to slaughter his next door neighbour after she chops up his pet snake; the fact that neighbour Mrs Goodman is played by Anna Wing - who spent years as Lou Beale in EASTENDERS - adds to this bizarre and nihilistic viewing experience.

Davenport would return to direct two totally unconnected sequels in the X-FILES obsessed 1990s: **XTRO II: THE SECOND ENCOUNTER** and **XTRO 3: WATCH THE SKIES**.

CREEPOZOIDS
(US, 1987, Empire/Beyond Infinity/Titan, 72 mins)

Iowa native Linnea Quigley is best remembered for her 1980s horror output such as **HOLLYWOOD CHAINSAW HOOKERS**, **NIGHT OF THE DEMONS**, **RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD** and **SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT** (where she is impaled on deer antlers). In this David DeCoteau opus, Quigley plays Blanca, one of five military deserters struggling to survive after a nuclear apocalypse. Another of the **ALIEN** clones still cluttering up video shelves almost a decade after Ridley Scott's film had been and gone, the film is set in an abandoned research facility (actually a Los Angeles warehouse), where the cast are being gorily dispatched by a giant mutant creature. The monster is the by-product of a failed experiment to create a soldier that could create its own amino acids, thus obviating the need for food.

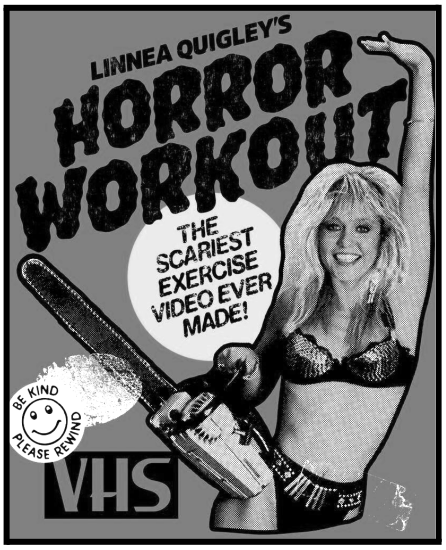
Confined to a couple of sparsely dressed sets, there is a lot of wandering around and bickering, although excitement levels are briefly tweaked by Blanca and Kate (Kim McKamy) wrestling a giant stuffed rat. The last few minutes throw in a mutant baby to no discernible effect, other than having it strangled by its own umbilical cord (it lives anyway).

CREEPOZOIDS is best remembered for Quigley's soapy shower scene fifteen minutes in, while McKamy keeps her clothes on (ironic as a couple of years later she'd change her name to Ashlyn Gere and become one of the early 1990s most prolific and popular porn stars). In fact, Gere was one of few adult film actresses to land regular roles on US network TV while maintaining her porn career, before becoming a real estate agent.

LINNEA QUIGLEY'S HORROR WORKOUT
(US, 1990, Cinema Home Video/Legacy, 60 mins)

Jane Fonda took the world by storm when she released her workout video, and soon after every female celebrity from Cher to Traci Lords had tapes on store shelves. Directed by Kenneth J. Hall - who helmed **EVIL SPAWN** as well as providing effects for the likes of **GHOULIES** and **CRITTERS** - **LINNEA QUIGLEY'S HORROR WORKOUT** is more of a party tape, as Quigley uses her Scream Queen credentials to the full in this spoof exercise VHS shot over two days. Opening with the obligatory shower sequence, Quigley explains that she needs to keep in trim for her on-screen appearances, which are generously illustrated by footage from her back catalogue.

The first routine sees our starlet in front of a fireplace wearing a silver-studded bra. Next, while jogging through a cemetery, she disturbs a group of zombies, and bemoans the undead for being out of shape. This is remedied by an excruciatingly extended swimming pool workout (actually filmed at Linnea's parents house). And after a slumber party that is just an excuse for another routine and more film clips things turn darker, as the girls are murdered by a maniac wearing a Ronald Reagan mask.



The three workout sequences are tedious rather than titillating, all accompanied by an equally repetitive synth soundtrack.These, together with the generous helping of clips and stills eventually get us past the contracted hour mark (there are even bloopers during the credits to aid the padding). Played out with fixed smiles and laboured humour, the climax however does deliver, making good use of typical slasher dialogue, a cat scare, a head in a toilet and a satisfying payoff.

THE WILD WORLD OF BATWOMAN
(US, 1966, ADP Pictures, 66 mins)

Jerry Warren was an American filmmaker not in love with film. He did everything for a quick buck, utilising stock footage and re-editing acquired foreign movies, once stating "I never tried to compete, or make anything worthwhile. Its not very fair to the public, but that was my attitude." As part of his splicing and dicing, Swedish **TERROR IN THE MIDNIGHT SUN** became **INVASION OF THE ANIMAL PEOPLE**, and Mexico's **THE AZTEC MUMMY** and **HOUSE OF TERROR** morphed into **ATTACK OF THE MAYAN MUMMY** and **FACE OF THE SCREAMING WEREWOLF**.

There were also a handful of largely original productions, including the Yeti picture **MAN BEAST** and **TEENAGE ZOMBIES**, and this is another, made to cash-in on the then BATMAN TV show fad. Batwoman (Katherine Victor) and her team of Batgirls (played by go-go dancers) are recruited by the Ayjaz Development Company to protect their listening device THe Atomic Hearing Aid. Powerful but unstable, it has been denied a patent, and stolen by Batwoman's arch enemy Rat Fink (Richard Banks), helped by scientist Dr Neon (George Mitchell), hunchback assistant Heathcliff (Lloyd Nelson) and two allegedly comedic henchmen.

Penny pinching here sees footage used from **THE MOLE PEOPLE** (for Rat Fink's cave hideout) and Swedish **NO TIME TO KILL** (the opening robbery). Victor actually had to make her own costume, replete with a bat symbol drawn on her chest with eyeliner. Thematically goofy and full of science babble, we also learn that the Batgirls are actually vampires "but only in the synthetic sense," preferring yogurt rather than the conventional yearning for blood.

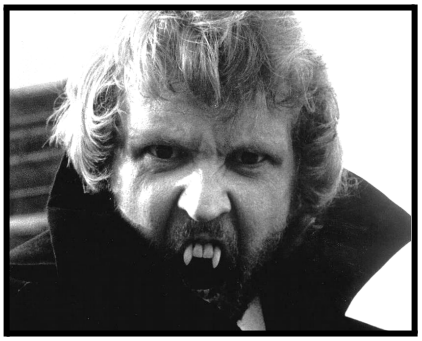
THE BATWOMAN
(Mexico, 1968, Cinematográfica Calderón, 80 mins)

The theatrics of Mexican wrestling is particularly kinetic, characterised by masked contestants and high-flying maneuvers. This style soon transferred to fantastic cinema; El Santo shared certain parallels with Batman - not only did he have a mask and cape, the star had a distinctive car, an underground cave and a special arrangement with a police commissioner. Although foes in the ring, El Santo and Blue Demon became film partners, tackling an array of martians and monsters. A female team also had a series of adventures, reaching its zenith with **WRESTLING WOMEN VS THE AZTEC MUMMY**.

THE BATWOMAN was released into this hybrid world, with additional influence from spy and beach party pictures. Socialite and multi-talented athlete Gloria (Italian Maura Monti) - alias Batwoman - is brought in on a case where wrestlers are mysteriously disappearing. It turns out that mad neurosurgeon Eric Williams (Roberto Canedo) is capturing these specimens and extracting their pineal gland, in order to develop a race of fish-men.

For such an exciting synopsis, **THE BATWOMAN** is amazingly pedestrian. The action sequences are long buildups to swift anti-climaxes, and the underwater scenes require editing. In the ridiculous ending, after Gloria is built up as a strong heroine, she recoils from the sight of a mouse, and has to be comforted by two male companions. At least the fish-men costume is fun, a fusion between a Toho Godzilla nemesis and the aquatic creatures from the 1929 **MYSTERIOUS ISLAND**.

SON OF DRACULA
(GB, 1974, Apple Films, 90 mins)



Chums Harry Nilsson and Ringo Starr team up for this musical travesty. Attempting to cash in on the success of Mel Brooks' **YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN**, the film is also known as **YOUNG DRACULA**. Written by **TALES THAT WITNESS MADNESS** scribe Jennifer Jayne in the failed hope of casting David Bowie, we open in 1800s Transylvania, where Baron Frankenstein's dwarf assistant (Skip Martin) stakes The Prince of Darkness (Dan Meaden). Merlin the Magician (Starr) discovers that one of The Count's brides is pregnant and will give birth to a son in a hundred years. The offspring Count Downe (Nilsson) is due to be crowned King of the Underworld in 1970s London, but in the seventy-two hours beforehand he is vulnerable in deciding his future. Eventually he wants to become human in the name of love - especially that of Amber (Suzanna Leigh) - thanks to wheelchair-bound Van Helsing (Dennis Price) and despite the plotting of the immortal Baron (Freddie Jones).

Actually completed in 1972, Starr's excruciatingly dull vanity project failed to pick up any distribution. Realising that this comedy actually had no jokes - and hid behind Nilsson's musical numbers and message of love - the ex-Beatle turned to resident MONTY PYTHON alcoholic Graham Chapman for a re-write. However this version allegedly made even less sense, and has never been made public (**SON OF DRACULA** eventually was shown on a limited run in the States).

Basically a pantomime with padding (Count Downe foils a completely random attack by a werewolf), director Freddie Francis further laces the production with classic interpretations of monsters (Meaden's Dracula actually takes Nosferatu as a blueprint, and there are also appearances by Frankenstein's creature, the Mummy and even a Medusa and a Fu Manchu). In fact the only point of interest are the musicians on show, which includes John Bonham and Keith Moon exchanging drumming duties in Downe's band.

VAMPIRA
(GB, 1974, World Film Services, 88 mins)

Similar to **SON OF DRACULA**, this production was re-christened **OLD DRACULA** by AIP in the States, to milk the draw of **YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN**. Scripted by Jeremy Lloyd - co-creator of sitcoms ARE YOU BEING SERVED? And 'ALLO 'ALLO! - **VAMPIRA** is not so much unfunny but downright insulting. Starting at Castle Dracula (which is now open to public tours), an aging Count (David Niven, fighting to keep his dignity) and manservant Maltravers (Peter Bayliss) welcome a spooky photoshoot ("Most Biteable Playmate") from *Playboy*'s London entourage, headed by Pottinger (Bernard Bresslaw). The Bunnies unwittingly give blood so the vampire can restore life to his beloved consort Vampira, who has been in a coma for fifty years after losing her immortality to an anaemic peasant. Finding the triple-O blood group to resurrect the Countess, the transfusion backfires as one of the models is black, a façade which Vampira adopts (as Teresa Graves).

The black vampire develops a bi-sexual lust, enjoying her environment and skin colour. This is undermined by the dialogue, particularly when Maltravers tries to explain Vampira's change of appearance ("you don't think, Sir, the deep freeze wasn't working properly and she's - well - gorn orf?")

On a brighter note, the cast includes female luminaries Veronica Carlson and Penny Irving as *Playboy* Bunnies, Luan Peters as Pottinger's secretary, and MONTY PYTHON regular Carol Cleveland as a damsel in distress who is inexplicably helped by The Count. The standout however is Linda Hayden as Castle Dracula's disgruntled German student Helga. Although her Teutonic accent is questionable, Hayden excels in an almost cameo role, bitten and transformed into a white gowned, frizzy-haired succubus. Initially aiding the dinner guests, Helga is then ceremonially dispatched in an upright coffin in a macabre parody of TV gameshow THE GOLDEN SHOT.

MOTHER RILEY MEETS THE VAMPIRE
(GB, 1952, Fernwood, 74 mins)

After serving in the Royal Navy during World War II, John Gilling became a prolific director and screenwriter in British cinema. The filmmaker is best known for his masterful take on Burke and Hare, **THE FLESH AND THE FIENDS**, and the two anti-colonial Hammer "Cornish Classics" **PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES** and **THE REPTILE**. At the other end of his directorial achievements we have **MOTHER RILEY MEETS THE VAMPIRE** ("It's enough to make a bat laugh!"), which was the UK's first vampire picture and the final film in the Old Mother Riley comedies, featuring Arthur Lucan in drag as the eponymous off-kilter Irish washerwoman.

Bela Lugosi stars as Van Housen/The Vampire, but his arrival in England is not because of blood, rather to obtain uranium to fuel an army of super robots. The two characters meet thanks to a mix-up: Riley's inheritance goods of a banjo and a bedwarmer are mistakenly delivered to Van Housen, while the villain's Mark I prototype automaton ends up at Riley's shop.

Lucan and Lugosi are both at the end of their careers, and one could argue that this is Bela's last good performance before slipping into morphine addiction and Ed Wood Jnr appearances. On the suggestion of Richard Gordon, Bela had traveled to the UK to appear in a stage tour of *Dracula*, which was such a disaster Lugosi and his wife were unable to pay their way home (engagements came to an abrupt halt when a promoter absconded with the boxoffice receipts and abandoned the cast and crew). Luckily, Gordon persuaded fellow producer George Minter to use the actor here to solve the issue.

Retitled **VAMPIRE OVER LONDON** for American distribution, the film sat on the shelf until 1964, by which time it had been rebranded again to **MY SON THE VAMPIRE**. A new title sequence was created to accommodate a novelty song by Allan Sherman, then a recording star known for his album *'My Son, The Folk Singer.'*

THE MAD LOVE LIFE OF A HOT VAMPIRE
(US, 1971, Steckler Movies, 50 mins)

Low budget *auteur* Ray Dennis Steckler was renowned for working from intentionally incomplete scripts, providing his films with a surreal fluidity which could even shift genres (for example, his 1966 kidnapping caper **RAT PFINK A BOO BOO** morphs into a BATMAN TV show pastiche forty minutes in, on grounds of Steckler's own boredom). Most famous for his monster musical **THE INCREDIBLY STRANGE CREATURES WHO STOPPED LIVING AND BECAME MIXED-UP ZOMBIES**, by the late 1960s he was helming music promos and by the dawn of the 1970s - with the demise of drive-ins - Steckler turned to hardcore, using pseudonyms such as Sven Christian, Sven Hellstrom and Cindy Lou Sutters.

This distortion of cinema sees Jim Parker - famous for being SHOCK THEATRE horror host The Vegas Vampire - play Dracula. The Prince of Darkness and his hunchback assistant (Rock Heinrich) move to Arizona and send out three undead hookers to pick up men and drain them of their genital blood. Professor Van Helsing (Will Long) visits ex-student Bill and his girlfriend Janet, who link the disappearance of Bill's sister's corpse after a car accident to Dracula's general scheme of murder. When the sister attacks Janet in the toilet, Van Helsing is led to Darcula's lair, exposing the fiend to sunlight; leaving only his cape, the sobbing hunchback uses it to blow his nose.

Grimy, unarousing and drawn out even at fifty minutes, the film is narrated by Dracula's wife Elaina (portrayed by Steckler's then wife Carolyn Brandt), who champions her husband with phrases like "Dracula is groovy!" and "Dracula decides to make love, not war.' Such admiration is particularly misplaced, as Parker grimaces and gurns his way through this literal horror.

TV Zone: Disintegration of The Sea Devils

DOCTOR WHO - THE SEA DEVILS
(GB, 1972, BBC, 6 x 25 mins)
DOCTOR WHO - WARRIORS OF THE DEEP
(GB, 1984, BBC, 4 x 25 mins)
DOCTOR WHO - LEGEND OF THE SEA DEVILS
(GB, 2022, Bad Wolf/BBC Studios, 48 mins)
THE WAR BETWEEN THE LAND AND THE SEA
(GB, 2025, Bad Wolf/BBC Studios, 5 x 43-53 mins)

In DOCTOR WHO, The Sea Devils are cousins of the cave dwelling Silurians. Both invert the alien invasion scenario in a number of entries that depict quests to reclaim *their* Earth. THE SEA DEVILS is the archetypal Third Doctor (Jon Pertwee) adventure yarn, where UNIT is substituted by enthusiastic support from the Royal Navy (including a submarine, a hovercraft and a diving bell). Aided by the misguided Colonel Trenchard (Clive Morton), The Master (Roger Delgado) is stealing Naval equipment to build a machine to revive The Sea Devils from hibernation, while he is imprisoned on a high-security island.

The end of episode three provides one of the most iconic Time Lord moments, as Sea Devils rise from the water and advance up a beach. Like The Silurians, the titular menace is wonderfully conceived, their turtle-like head pieces worn as top hats by actors so that they towered even over Pertwee. The real meat is the interplay between The Doctor and The Master ("he used to be a friend of mine once ... a very good friend") but Malcolm Clarke's incidental soundscapes cheapen the serial. Using the Radiophonic Workshop's newly acquired EMS Synthi 100 to his own anarchic whim, the score brings an artificiality which treads a fine line between musical composition and sound effect.

WARRIORS OF THE DEEP sees Silurians and Sea Devils return after over a decade. Redesigns further devalue: the stockier Silurians now speak through their third eye, and the Sea Devils don a Samurai-inspired outfit. In this Cold War allegory, The Doctor (Peter Davison), Tegan (Janet Fielding) and Turlough (Mark Strickson) arrive on Earth's Sea Base 4. Within it, a team led by Commander Vorshak (Tom Adams) undergo regular nuclear missile tests to ensure they are ready to combat their rival (equally unnamed) superpower. However, a Silurian triad revives a colony of Sea Devils to use the weapons to attack the Base enemy, provoking a global catastrophe which will allow the reptiles to reclaim the world. An electrified sea beast - the Myrka - is sent to infiltrate the humans, who are also housing spies Nilson (Ian McCulloch) and Solow (Ingrid Pitt).

Early in its production, Margaret Thatcher announced a snap General Election, creating sudden demand for BBC studio space. Unexpectedly losing two weeks from an already pressured schedule, many signs of this are amplified to ramshackle proportions: scenes had little or no rehearsal time, actors fluff lines because only one take could be afforded, and sets had to be constantly realigned. The Myrka costume - which resembles a pantomime horse - was completed only an hour before shooting, leaving the puppeteers high on glue, and as paint had not dried, it visibly rubbed off on surroundings. The ultimate irony was that the creature was controlled by William Perrie and John Asquith, famous for RENTAGHOST's Dobbin. Genetically modified by Silurians from an unknown species of dinosaur, The Myrka holds a particular resonance in WHO lore. Its attack on polystyrene bulkhead doors and electrocution of a karate-kicking Ingrid Pitt are forever burnt into the retina of long-suffering Whovians. The Silurians and Sea Devils fare little better, looking static and childish (taking cue from THE SEA DEVILS, actor heads are at neck level, but here give a wobbling and crooked appearance)

Cementing its catalogue of chaos, the four-parter permanently bathes its sets in bright light, enabling the viewer to easily identify every continuity error and awkward mishap. Under these circumstances it seems harsh for Michael Grade to use the Myrka in a clip for his guest appearance on ROOM 101, many regarding the twenty-first season opener as a key element towards the slow death and eventual cancellation of Classic WHO.

Broadcast as a no-so swashbuckling Easter Special, Modern WHO maligns the underwater warriors further in LEGEND OF THE SEA DEVILS. The Thirteenth Doctor (Jodie Whittaker), with companions Yaz (Mandip Gill) and Dan (John Bishop), set out to find the hidden treasure of the *Flor de la Mar*. But they end up at the wrong time and team up with Madam Ching (Crystal Yu), as they battle the aquatic foes for the "Keystone." It's a bloated, erratic mess, with amateurish action and endless technobabble. There are also attempts to develop the relationship between The Doctor and Yaz, which entails a series of head tilts for the latter. Hollow and on-dimentional, it is further dragged down by horrible CGI.

LEGEND OF THE SEA DEVILS' updated creature design by Ray Holman and Robert Allsop is laughable, reducing them to bug-eyed, rubbery imitation. Made shorter to compensate for Whittaker's height, Holman "included some nods to the original look, weaving netting through the costumes" and their armour. When creating the heads, Allsop apparently took measurements from a cast for the 1980s Sea Devils, claiming that the newer masks enabled "more realistic expressions."

Penned by Russell T. Davies and Pete McTighe, THE WAR BETWEEN THE LAND AND THE SEA is a Modern WHO companion piece that completed the BBC and Disney contractual obligation. A crushing disappointment, it achieves the difficult balancing act of unintentional hilarity, numbing boredom and badly timed fish jokes. What was built-up as a more adult series is quickly replaced by the usual Kinder-garden-level lecturing. Barclay Pierre-Dupont (Russell Tovey) is a low-level UNIT Transportation Clerk, estranged from partner Barbara (Ann Akinjirin) and non-binary teenage child Kirby (Cat Gannon). However, due to an HR error (!), Barclay becomes part of a UNIT task-force to engage with "Homo Aqua," a sea species led by Salt (Gugu Mbatha-Raw). Understandably, they are furious about the contamination humanity has caused to the oceans, and choose Barclay as their contact in peace talks, as he was the only person to show respect with a deceased Sea Devil.

Pierre-Dupont is a metaphor for modern entertainment - a tide of mistaken hiring - and the shoehorned diversity is now a twin UNIT wheelchair attack of Bingham (Ruth Madeley) and Chesney (tetraplegic George Robinson). And in a love story nobody is interested in, we get more time with UNIT commander-in-chief Kate Lethbridge-Stewart (Jemma Redgrave) and toy boy Colonel Ibrahim (Alexander Devrient); thankfully Ibrahim is shot dead by an equivalent of the JFK magic bullet.

There certainly is no war in the exciting, battle-sense, nor much screen time for The Sea Devils themselves (a shame, as the design is sleek). What we do get is blanket posturing about ineffectual and corrupt power structures. The laborious threads that had been woven are now adrenalised into a finishing line of signal disruptors, ancient unity and an engineered virus so clever it can only affect nine out of every ten Sea Devils. Yearning for a new life with Salt, Barclay abandons humanity and develops gills, swimming away with her after an underwater ballet that reminds of the interplay between Julia Adams and **THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON**.

It's a catalogue of moments, and these are not reinforced. For example, when all the pollutants from the sea are hurled back at us - including what's left of the Titanic - all subsequent scenes do not show any rubbish on the streets. Much simpler settings are also fumbled, such as the UNIT contamination chamber, which isn't even contained. The only way it can make any sense is that we are inside the fragmenting mind of Lethbridge-Stewart. In a typically bizarre coda, she asks a jogger on a beach to pick up a discarded bottle. When the man refuses - somehow oblivious to the events of the series - Kate pulls a gun on him and insists he picks up his rubbish, becoming increasingly unhinged.

Comics Scene: Sax and Violence

The Courtyard
(US, 2002, Avatar Press, 2 Issues)
Neonomicon
(US, 2010-11, Avatar Press, 4 Issues)

Written by Antony Johnston and illustrated by Jacen Burrows, *The Courtyard* is based on a 1994 H.P. Lovecraft narrative by Alan Moore, which appeared in the Creation anthology *The Starry Wisdom*. It tells of unorthodox FBI agent Aldo Sax, investigating three seemingly unrelated ritual murders in the United States using anomaly theory, a method that correlates disparate data into a cohesive whole. His exploration leads him to Club Zothique and a drug called Aklo, peddled by veiled Johnny Carcosa. Sax is given a white powder and experiences spectral planes and primordial creatures; understanding that Aklo is not a drug but the language Carcosa had spoken, the visions drive Sax to kill using the same *modus operandi* as the cases he was examining.

Inspired by the ninth sonnet of *Fungi from Yuggoth*, the long-faced Sax is almost a modern Lovecraft facsimile, and even in such a short story it is laced with fan service. Aklo has been used by many authors after its inception in Arthur Machen's 1899 *The White People*, a mystical language which has been applied by Lovecraft himself (*The Dunwich Horror*, *The Haunter of the Dark*); Zothique is an imaged future continent in the works of Clark Ashton Smith; the action takes place in Red Hook, with the protagonist mimicking the blatant racism from Lovecraft's *The Horror at Red Hook*; and to flag the sexualities to come, Carcosa offers to sell Aldo "a cock ring from Innsmouth."

The story continues in the notorious *Neonomicon*, which was scripted by Moore and drawn by a returning Burrows. The Northampton *magus* has described his writing with this mini-series as "really fucking horrible." We begin with FBI agents Gordon Lamper and Merril Brears visiting Sax at a psychiatric hospital. They are investigating a copycat killer, and want to question him about his motives, yet he only speaks gibberish. Lamper and Brears track down Carcosa whose paraphernalia lead them to a specialty shop in Salem - Whisperers in Darkness - stockists of occult books and weird sex toys (which include dildo tentacles, Cthulhu gimp masks and an Elder Thing as an inflatable doll). Going undercover as husband and wife, the agents attend an orgy hosted by the owners, members of the Esoteric Order of Dagon who regularly indulge in rituals to attract the sexual attention of a race of fishmen.

This melange continues with the duo exposed and Lamper murdered by the cultists. Brears is sexually assaulted by the Order then locked in a room with a Deep One, which rapes her continuously for several days. During this ordeal Brears has a vision of Carcosa, who reveals himself as an avatar of Great Old One Nyarlathotep. When the sea creature tastes a drop of Brears' urine, it determines that she is pregnant and helps her escape into the ocean. Brears returns to the city and contacts the FBI, who raid the specialty shop John Woo-style. Three months later Brears visits Sax and is able to understand his speech as Aklo, the language of the Deep Ones. Brears realises that Lovecraft's fiction is actually premonitions of a future apocalypse, an event that will be heralded by the birth of her child, Cthulhu.

The prolonged interracial rape owes little to Lovecraftian cosmic horror, more like the comic book equivalent of passing a car crash; you look, but you know you shouldn't. In a 2010 interview with Wired.com, Moore labels *Neonomicon* "one of the most unpleasant things I have ever written," and was forged against fallout from the **WATCHMEN** movie and an impending issue with HMRC. "Although I took it to pay off the tax bill," says Moore, "I'm always going to make sure I try and make it the best possible story I can. Because I was in a very misanthropic state, I probably wasn't at my most cheery. So *Neonomicon* is very black, and I'm only using black to describe it because there isn't a darker colour." Ultimately we are dealing with suppressed Lovecraft themes of underlying racism and lack of sexuality, but done with such a brutal makeover it feels as if the reader is experiencing a snuff movie.